



Edward Van Peenen II

August 17, 1940 - September 27, 2019

Anyone who has spent any amount of time in Valdosta, Georgia, over the past 50 or so years probably knew Edward Van Peenen, or at least remembers seeing him riding his bike through town, teaching in a classroom at Valdosta State University (VSU), working as a volunteer at the library or Community Soup Kitchen, ushering at the First United Methodist Church or attending the symphony and community theater productions (he always liked to sit in the front row). He was known for his white hair and his mode of transportation.

Edward grew up in Kalamazoo, Michigan. He graduated from Kalamazoo Central High School in 1958. He received his bachelor's degree from Kalamazoo College and his master's degree from the University of Wisconsin. He taught physics at Reinhardt University in Waleska, Georgia, and then at Valdosta State University for 20 years. One summer he also taught physics to the crew aboard a U.S. Navy fast frigate on a Middle East tour. He really enjoyed that experience. Although Edward was originally a Michigander, he adopted Valdosta as his home for many years. He loved the warm weather and the people. He opted to stay even after he left his teaching job at VSU.

Edward was an intensely private person. Although he enjoyed being around people, he cherished his independence and alone time. He lived life on his terms. He was always true to himself and never tried to be someone other than who he was. He had a wonderful, curious mind. In his retirement years, he loved solving mentally challenging puzzles, listening to classical music and radio talk shows, acting in local plays and taking Learning in Retirement (LIR) classes. He strongly believed in personal responsibility. He chose to live simply and frugally, but he was also surprisingly generous when it came to others.

He was especially pleased when ex-students would recognize him and stop to say hello. He was thrilled when one of them would say that he inspired them in some way.

As long as he was able, he liked keeping active and having a routine. On a typical day, he would make his rounds, usually on his bike, which included shopping (always on the alert for bargains), reading the paper and surfing the Net at the library, and weighing himself once a week on the scale at a local supermarket. Staying trim was important to him.

Edward died on September 27, 2019 at the age of 79. He was the son of Edward Van Peenen and Jean Schipper Van Peenen, both deceased. He is survived by his sister, Mitzi Norman of Portage, Michigan, and several cousins. Edward will be laid to rest in Kalamazoo, Michigan. At his request, no services will be held.

In his final days, Edward felt blessed to have some very special people in his life, especially Dr. Charles and Nancy Hobby of Valdosta. Through their caring and kindness, he was able to approach the end of life with restful reassurance.

As his sister, I would like to say thank you to Dr. Charles and Nancy Hobby; all those he knew through LIR, Theatre Guild Valdosta, and the First United Methodist Church of Valdosta; his advisors; his teaching colleagues; and his medical providers for the friendship, acts of kindness, and care given my brother. Edward was a good man. Please keep a warm memory of a good time, or times, you may have shared with him close to your heart.

To send flowers to the family of Edward Van Peenen II, please visit [Tribute Store](#).

Guestbook

A place to share condolences and memories.

8 posts

Robert H. Poel Oct 06, 2019

Edward and I were classmates and fellow Physics Majors at Kalamazoo College. I have not seen or talked to Edward in many, many years, but I thought the description and story of his life to be totally consistent to the Ed I knew as classmates. I appreciated the obituaries description of his life and could immediately identify with it as the Edward I knew and studied with at "K". My condolences to his sister and family.

Natasha Fast Oct 04, 2019

I met Edward while working with Continuing Education at VSU, as he would often visit their office for Learning in Retirement classes. We connected a few times in that he rode bikes and I rode bikes to travel around time. Something about him struck me, I always saw him riding around town and it made me happy to see him, to himself, just enjoying a ride, even in his older years. I am saddened he has passed. He probably never realized how much I admired him and was encouraged by him, just by riding his bike, something I haven't been able to put into words myself. Mr. Van Peenan, you are missed!

Maria Taylor Oct 03, 2019

I will always remember this lovely and unusual gentleman, quietly chatting with him in the library, seeing him attend recitals at Whitehead Auditorium, which he did so faithfully, and a special occasion when my husband and I took him to a music performance in Thomasville. He will be missed. My condolences to Ed's family. May they find peace and comfort at this sad time.

Ken Kinard Oct 01, 2019



I remember Edward through TGV. Where I was a member. I had the opportunity to act with Edward in " Readers Theatre" . I will never forget him riding his bike everywhere , even after late practices .

Michael Glasscock Oct 01, 2019



I had the opportunity to work with Ed on stage. A gentle soul, a good man, he will be missed. My life is richer having known him.

Anonymous Sep 30, 2019

A donation has been made in Edward's memory to Odum Library at VSU, where he visited often. He will be missed.

Haley Hyatt Sep 29, 2019

My husband Barry and I missed seeing and chatting with Edward last night at the Valdosta Symphony's opening of the season concert. He would have loved it so much. Knowing that he is gone makes our hearts ache. We will miss him. Our condolences to his family.

John Wayne Baxter Sep 29, 2019

I had two Astronomy courses at Valdosta State College taught by Mr. Van Peenen. He was a great teacher and a great person. His inspiration led me to teach Astronomy at Lowndes High School for more than 20 years. He will be missed; God bless his family in this hour of sorrow.